



Rules of Play
Revised April 2024

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The SFGSL shall play softball according to the current and approved USA Softball Slow Pitch Rules. The following variations apply and supersede the USA Softball rules.

I. Definitions

- A. Teams:** A team is defined by the composition of its players, not by its name or sponsor. The USA Softball definition of a team is applied to teams in the SFGSL. All teams are subject to USA Softball team reclassification guidelines.
- B. New Players:** A new player is considered anyone who has not been an SFGSL member in the last two years or longer. All new SFGSL members (both Open & Women's+) are required to attend one New Player's Clinic for rating evaluation. This includes members who have transferred from other cities.
- C. Divisions:** For purposes of seasonal play within the SFGSL, divisions shall be designated as follows: Open A/B, Open C, Open D, Open E, Women's+ B/C, and Women's+ D.
 - i. The Open A/B Division shall consist of teams whose top ten player ratings are ≤ 270 .
 - a. No team rated lower than 170 is allowed to play in the A Division except any B team granted eligibility in or required to move to A Division under the berth allocations and no-repeat rule.
 - b. The B Division shall consist of teams whose top ten player ratings are ≤ 180 with no player above 20.
 - ii. The Open C Division shall consist of teams whose top ten player ratings are ≤ 140 with no player rating above 15.
 - iii. The Open D Division shall consist of teams whose top ten player ratings are ≤ 110 with no player rating above 12.
 - iv. The Open E Division shall consist of teams whose top ten player ratings are ≤ 75 with no player rating above an 8. No player with Question #3 of the ratings guidelines is eligible to participate in the E Division.
 - v. The Women's+ B/C division is for teams generally comprised of experienced players who have moderate to advanced skills.
 - a. Women's+ B is for teams generally comprised of competitive players who have a good knowledge of the game, have a developed skill set, and play the game in a competitive fashion.
 - b. Women's+ C is for teams generally comprised of more recreational and/or lower form of competitive players who are moderately skilled.
 - vi. The Women's+ D division is for teams generally comprised of the beginner player or less experienced players who are developing their skills and have a beginning knowledge of the game.

II. Equipment

- A. FACEGUARDS:** Each team is highly encouraged to wear a catcher/pitcher faceguard, but it is not mandatory.
- B. UNIFORMS:** Each player should have a shirt of like color with a six-inch (6") number shown on the back of their shirt. No metal cleats are allowed. Bandanas are acceptable, but not to be worn around the neck. Hats may be worn forwards or backwards.

- C. **GAME BALLS:** The home team is responsible for providing one (1) new game ball. These are distributed to managers in a league meeting prior to Opening Day. Game balls to be used are determined based on the official softballs approved for each division.
 - i. Women's+: ASANA 11" .44COR/375 Comp
 - ii. Open: IPS 12" .52COR/300 Comp
- D. **BATS:** The USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List will be enforced. All bats used must be legal for USA Softball play. Use of a Non-Approved (or altered) bat will result in the batter being called out and ejected.
 - i. SSUSA bats (Senior Softball USA) are not approved for play in USA Softball. The USA/ASA Stamp is the only valid stamp.
- E. **FIRST AID:** Each team must provide their own first aid supplies.

III. Eligibility

- A. **AGE LIMIT:** All players on the official roster must be 18 years of age or older at the time of registration.
- B. **FEES:** All team registration and member fees, and any other outstanding fees, must be paid by the registration deadline outlined in the Manager's Instructions document.
- C. **WAIVERS:** Each season, all members must accept the Member Contract prior to playing in the League.
- D. At the beginning of the season, players in the Open Division will be rated based on their most current rating submitted to IPS within the last two years. According to the Rating Guidelines, new players to the Open Division must be rated prior to playing their first game.
- E. All new SFGSL members for both the Open and Women's+ Divisions are required to attend a New Player's Clinic for rating evaluation by a ratings committee. This includes members who have transferred from other cities.
- F. For the deadline to add a player to your team, please refer to the Add/Drop Deadline on the website. The Open Division and Women's+ Division may have different deadlines.
- G. A member may transfer between teams only one time during the season prior to the add/delete deadline.
- H. Any member identifying oneself as transgender or non-binary may choose to play in any division.
- I. Any female identifying or transgender or non-binary player may choose to play in both divisions in the same season.
- J. **POST SEASON ELIGIBILITY**
 - i. **IPS:** For the open division, post-season play, a player must have been present at and listed on the lineup card of at least 50% of the team's games. Players must take the field (including EH) for at least a quarter of the games in the regular season.
 - ii. **ASANA:** For the Women's+ Division a player must have been present at and listed on the lineup card of at least 1/3 of the team's games to qualify for post-season play based on ASANA qualifications.
 - iii. It is up to the manager to see that these records are accurately kept. All managers must submit a line-up card to the official scorekeeper and to the umpire prior to the start of each game. A designated SFGSL Representative is responsible for collecting all lineup cards and Division Representatives are responsible for following up on all questions of eligibility.

- K. Members with injuries will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis if they do not meet these criteria and wish to participate in the IPS/ASANA World Series. The member must submit a written appeal to the Board via email no later than the last day of regular season play.
- L. The player eligibility requirements will be waived for all teams playing in an EOS (non-WSBT) tournament.
- M. **PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER:** If a team plays an ineligible player, the team will forfeit all games played by that ineligible player. A team can contest a player's eligibility. You must register an official protest to the umpire in the game in which you suspect that player is playing. For more information on protest procedures, refer to section XV Protests of this document and section XI Protest Procedures in the Ratings Guidelines.
- N. **DUAL LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP:** SFGSL members (both Open and Women's+) are eligible to play in other association leagues. Dual League Members must designate their primary league for IPS/ASANA World Series before the start of the season. Ratings will be owned by the primary league and shared by both leagues. If a rating is changed in either league, it will also be changed in the other league.

IV. Divisional Eligibility

- A. Any Open Division team will be required to move up in alignment with IPS policies on any "move up" rule.
- B. Any team that wins the regular season or playoffs in their division will be required to have all players' (regular season and pickup players for the World Series) ratings audited at the end of the season to determine if they are accurate. The audit will be conducted by a ratings committee. The skill of play during the regular season, tournaments, dual league play, and the World Series will be used in the audit of the ratings.
- C. Any team required to move up a division but not wishing to, may return to the same division provided the team does not meet the SFGSL definition of a returning team; 4 members or more are considered a returning team.

V. Seasonal Play

- A. For the current season, there will be four divisions within the Open Division. They will be named the Open A/B, Open C, Open D, and Open E.
 - i. Legends Teams are incorporated into the appropriate skill level division, e.g. Legends C will play in Open C and Legends D will play in Open D.
- B. For the current season, there will be two divisions within the Women's+ Division. They will be named the Women's + B/C and Women's + D.
- C. Any Open inter-divisional games may be played as exhibition games and will not count in either team's regular division standings.
- D. At the conclusion of the season, teams in all SFGSL Divisions will be ranked in succession according to the following method:
 - i. Win/loss record.
 - ii. Head-to-head competition with teams tied.
 - iii. Team with less points scored against.
 - iv. Teams with higher points scored differential.
- E. This ranking determines both division placement for seasonal play and WS Berth & EOS Tournament seeding.

VI. WS Berths

- A. World Series berths will be designated prior to the first game of the season, including the number of berths per division and how a berth is awarded per division.
- B. Open A – unlimited awards
- C. Open B – unlimited awards.
- D. Open C shall be awarded with three berths. The Open C Division shall be eligible for a WS Berth by finishing 1st or 2nd in regular season play. The third WS berth will be awarded to the winner of the Open C EOS WS Berth tournament.
- E. Legends C shall be awarded with two berths.
- F. Open D shall be awarded with two berths. The Open D Division shall be eligible for a WS Berth by finishing 1st or 2nd in regular season play. The third WS berth will be awarded to the winner of the Open D EOS WS Berth tournament.
- G. Legends D shall be awarded with two berths.
- H. Open E shall be awarded one berth. The one WS berth will be awarded to the winner of the Open E EOS WS Berth tournament.
- I. Women's+ B, C, D – Five berths are awarded to all the Women's+ division teams combined. If the demand exceeds the number of berths, the returning teams from prior year will receive a berth and the balance will be split evenly between the divisions going to the top seeds.

VII. WS Berth Tournaments & EOS Tournaments

- A. Teams are required to submit their formal intention to participate in the IPS/ASANA World Series in advance as designated per the league's published calendar. Tournaments will be double elimination and held at the conclusion of the regular season play, unless otherwise specified.
- B. For WS Berth tournaments, teams who would not meet the eligibility requirements to attend the IPS/ASANA World Series are not eligible to participate in the EOS WSBT.
- C. For Inter-Divisional tournament play, teams will be seeded in the order of their divisions. I.e. If an A/B team plays with a C team, they will be seeded before the C teams; if a D team plays with a C team, they will be seeded after the C teams, etc.
- D. All Open A/B, C, D, E, Women's+ B/C, and Women's+ D teams will be eligible to participate in an EOS tournament as determined by the division rating's guidelines.
- E. EOS tournaments require a minimum of five teams and may be eliminated at the board's discretion depending on field availability and budget limitations.
- F. For EOS tournaments, rosters will be due three days prior.

VIII. Rosters

- A. **MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS:** With exception of the Open A Division, a team roster will consist of no more than 20 players, regardless of whether they actively play softball. Open A Division rosters may have a maximum of 25 players. There is no limit on associate members.
- B. **ADDING PLAYERS:** Members can be added to a team roster after the registration deadline and up until the Add/Delete deadline. For more information on this procedure and deadline refer to the Manager's Checklist and league calendar.
- C. **FALSIFYING INFORMATION:** Any member falsifying information on forms identified in the Manager's Checklist will be subject to action by the Board including but not limited to game suspensions and or fines.

IX. Lineups

- A. **NUMBER OF STARTING PLAYERS:** A team may start play with as few as nine (9) or as many as twelve (12), without penalty.

- B. EXTRA PLAYER:** If a team chooses to have 11 or 12 players in its lineup, the team can designate one or two players as EP (Extra Player). The offensive position in the lineup of extra players cannot change but defensive positions can. Once the line-up cards have been exchanged, they are official and EPs cannot be added to the starting lineup. The only exception is the Shorthanded Rule.
- C. SHORTHANDED RULE:** A team may start or finish the game with 9 players without penalty. When playing shorthanded and a 10th player arrives, that player must be immediately inserted into the lineup. A team using an EP may finish the game with 9 or 10 players without penalty if players are lost for any reason other than ejection and no substitute is available. If a player is lost due to ejection and no substitute is available, the team must take an out per slot when the vacancy in the lineup comes up to bat.
- D. OFFICIAL LINEUP:** All players eligible and present to participate in a game should be listed on the lineup card. For purposes of post-season eligibility, a player is considered legally part of the game if they are present at the playing site before the end of a game and their name has been added on the lineup card. A player present at the playing site and listed on the lineup card will receive credit for WS Berth/EOS eligibility regardless of whether they entered the game.
- E. LINEUP CARD PROCEDURES**
- i. A complete lineup card will have team name, date, player's last name, first initial, jersey number and a manager or coach's signature.
 - ii. List all starting players in the order in which they will bat.
 - iii. List all substitute players who are eligible and present for that game in the non-starter section of the lineup card.
 - iv. Present the card to the umpire who will check and collect it during the pre-game meeting.
 - v. Eligible players who arrive late and who have not been listed on the lineup should be added at the bottom in the non-starter area of the lineup card. Late arrivals may be added to the non-starter area if game time remains on the clock.
 - vi. Players listed on the lineup who are not present at the start of the game must be removed from the lineup until they arrive. Upon arrival, the manager of the team should then notify the umpire to add that player's name to the lineup card. The original cardstock copy of the lineup (the umpire's copy) will go in the field envelopes as official SFGSL scorecard record of the game.
 - vii. At the end of each game, managers are required to initial the score on the umpire's lineup card(s).

X. Time Limit

- A.** Games will be 60 minutes with no new inning after 55 minutes of play.

XI. Legal Pitch Delivery

- A.** The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.
- B.** The pitcher must begin each pitch with at least one foot in contact with the pitching plate.

XII. Starting Count

- A.** All Divisions begin with a one ball and one strike count (1-1) with one free foul given after the second strike.

XIII. Run Rule

- A. The USA Softball Run Rule will be in effect: 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings, 10 runs after 5 innings.
- B. **EQUALIZER RULE:** For interdivisional play between Women's+ B/C and Women's+ D and interdivisional play between Open D and Open E, teams have a 5 runs per inning limit through the first 4 innings (if 3 outs are not recorded.) Innings 5 through 7 are "open" scoring. The lower division team will receive an equalizer of up to five runs allocated at one additional run per inning played for innings 1-5 if the lower division team does not score 5 runs in innings 1-5.
 - i. The RUN RULE is still in effect.

XIV. Tie Games

- A. Regular season games can end in a tie if a game is tied after 60 minutes, or 7 innings. If tied after full 7 innings are played and there is still time left on the clock, the game is over.
- B. WS Berth/EOS Tournament games cannot end in a tie; therefore, the USA Softball Tie Breaker Rule will take effect for subsequent innings until a winner is established.

XV. Courtesy Runner

- A. A courtesy runner (CR) can only be used once a player has successfully reached first base or beyond and time has been called.
- B. Any eligible player on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a CR. A CR may be used one time per inning at any time once play has stopped and time has been called.
 - i. Legends Exception: In alignment with 2024 IPS rules, Legends teams are allotted 2 CRs per inning.
 - ii. ADA Exception: A player with an approved ADA accommodation that requires a runner can use a CR each time they successfully reach first base or beyond.
 - iii. Pitcher Exception: The SFGSL will align with IPS on this rule and **not** adopt the 2024 USA Softball rule allowing the pitcher to have a CR. The standard CR rule applies to pitchers.
- C. If a CR whose turn at bat comes up while on base:
 - i. The player who the CR is running for will be called out.
 - ii. The CR will be removed from base to take their turn at bat.
 - iii. A second CR or substitute is not permitted at this time.

XVI. Home Run Rule

- A. The following home run limits apply:
 - i. Open A/B – 3
 - a. Exceeding the HR limit will result in an out.
 - ii. Open C – 1
 - a. Exceeding the HR limit will result in an out.
 - iii. Open D & E – 0
 - a. Exceeding the HR limit will be a half-inning ending out.
 - iv. Women's+ Division – unlimited.
 - a. When playing an opponent from a lower division, any fair, fly ball over the fence will be an out.

XVII. Base Stealing

- A. Base stealing is not allowed.

XVIII. Grace Period

- A. A team that does not have at least nine players at the playing site may request up to a ten-minute delay of game. If the 9th player arrives before the end of the ten-minute grace period,

the game must begin without further delay. After the lineup cards become official and a 10th player arrives, they must immediately be added to the starting lineup. Any additional players may only be added as substitutes.

- B. When a game is delayed by requesting the grace period be used, the length of the game will be shortened by the number of minutes of the delay.
- C. The grace period applies to regular league play only. During WS Berth and/or EOS tournaments, game time is forfeit time.

XIX. Pick Up Players

A. Women's+ Divisions:

- i. During season play, a team with as few as 6 present players can pick up as many as 3 players to play for them in that game. A team using pick up players can have no more than 9 total players for that game. The players must be SFGSL registered members. Pick up players must be removed when members of the team roster arrive. A team can pick up players from either Women's+ division. If the rating(s) of these pickup players would bump the team up to a higher division the appropriate equalizer rule will or will not be used. Non cisgender men who only play in the equivalent or lower open division can also be pickup players. Pickup players should be designated with "PU" next to the players' name.

B. Open Division:

- i. For E, D, and C division During season play, a team with as few as 6 present players can pick up as many as 3 players to play for them in that game. A team using pick up players can have no more than 9 total players for that game. The players must be SFGSL registered members. Pick up players must be removed when members of the team roster arrive. For inter-divisional games, pick up players may be at the level of either division. The players must be SFGSL registered members. Pick up players must be removed when members of the team roster arrive. Pickup players should be designated with "PU" next to the players' name.
- ii. Legends Teams: For Legends teams, only players that would be eligible to register in the Legends division may be pickup players. Pickup players should be designated with "PU" next to the players' name.
- iii. A/B Exceptions:
 - a. For games in the A/B division teams must have a minimum of 6 players from their season roster to avoid a forfeit. Teams may pick up players to get to a roster of 10. Pickup players should be designated with "PU" next to the players' name.
 - b. For interdivisional play between the A/B and the C division, teams must have a minimum of 6 players from their season roster to avoid a forfeit. Teams may pick up players to get to a roster of 9. Pickup players should be designated with "PU" next to the players' name.

C. World Series Berth and Non-World Series Berth Tournament Play:

- i. For EOS (non-WSBT) Open Division tournament play, pickup players cannot be used in any post season or tournament play unless prior agreed upon by the division representative and the commissioner.
- ii. For Women's+ Division: Players who play in the equivalent or lower Women's+ division can be pickup players. Open players are not eligible unless they are registered/rated as a Women's+ division player. On the day of the tournament, players may be picked up only

from eliminated teams, however they must be at the same rating or lower than the original member listed on the roster. The four to make twelve rule remains in effect.

- iii. The pick-up player rules do not apply for WS Berth Tournament games. All players must play for the team on the team whose roster they appear.

XX. Forfeits, Fines & Fees

- A. If a team does not have nine players by the end of the grace period, the game will be considered a 7:0 forfeit. If both teams are short at the end of the grace period, a double forfeit is declared.
- B. Any team forfeiting a game is fined \$50.00 for the first forfeit, \$75 for the second, and \$100 for the third. After three forfeits, the team manager and/or coach must meet with the Board. If a team provides advanced notification of an upcoming forfeiture, by midnight Friday, the fines will be reduced 25% respectively.
- C. The forfeiture fine is due the first FRIDAY by MIDNIGHT after the incident regardless of when the team's next game is and must be paid online by the team manager.
- D. Throughout the Spring Season there will be predetermined, mandatory league meetings and for the Open Division, mandatory rating meetings. A single representative from every team must attend. Missed meeting fines are \$35 and due by the next FRIDAY by MIDNIGHT.
- E. Teams that pull out of a WS berth tournament will be fined an amount of \$500.
- F. A team will be fined \$150 if they withdraw for any reason within 7 days of an EOS tournament.
- G. Fines generally will post 24 hours of incident for forfeiture or missed league/ratings meeting. It is the manager's responsibility to follow up with invoicing and payment to ensure compliance. Divisional representatives or Board Members may send out a courtesy reminder notification, but do not expect this.
- H. All fines not paid by the deadline will result in automatic forfeitures for the next scheduled game. Additional fines apply per forfeiture fine rules as noted above.
- I. Alcohol is NOT permitted at the fields and a \$50 fine will be assessed. This includes all players and the team's fans/guests. A second offense will require board review and may result in manager or player suspension and up to full team suspension.
- J. All third-party checks to the league will have an administration fee of 5% or \$25, whichever is higher.
- K. Members who register but do not pay their registration fees may be removed from the system after three days of inactivity.
- L. All requests for merchandise will require immediate upfront payment.
- M. Individual Membership fees (minus software finance charges) are refundable up to midnight on the Saturday prior to the first day of regularly scheduled games as long as the team roster remains with 10 or more players. Exceptions can be requested by the team manager to the Commissioner for board review. If an exception is granted by the board, a credit to the player's account will occur for a future season.
- N. Full team refunds are not possible once the team registration deadline closes. If a team disbands between the registration deadline and opening day, funds can be partially refunded to the team only for the portion of the roster in excess of ten players. Sponsor checks are refundable up to opening day.

XXI. Tournament Play

- A. The highest seeded team will be the home team throughout the tournament. If the away team forces an IF game, they will become the home team for that game.

- B. Championship games will have no time limit.
- C. See Player Eligibility and Pick-Up Players for additional tournament play rules.

XXII. Official Scorekeeper

- A. The home team is the official scorekeeper. If the home team does not have a scorekeeper, the visiting team may keep the official score.
- B. The official score will be recorded by the umpire on the line-up card and submitted to the League after each game.

XXIII. Ejections

- A. Any player ejected by an umpire is automatically suspended from the team's next game and may be subject to further actions by the Board upon recommendation by the UIC, after an incident investigation.
- B. There is absolutely NO DRINKING during your game! This is an automatic ejection!

XXIV. Protests

- A. An official protest involves a question about a rule interpretation, an illegal player, or an ineligible player. Judgment calls by the umpire cannot be protested. Only the team manager may notify the plate umpire of their intent to play the game under protest. An official protest must be registered to the umpire before the next pitch or before the umpire leaves the field. The protest must be noted on the lineup card, along with the details of the protest, the inning, number of outs, ball and strike count, position of base runners, and time. If the protest cannot be resolved immediately, the game should go on.
- B. Any player who is challenged on eligibility will be requested to show proof of ID to the umpire. The umpire will designate the player in question on the line-up card. If the player does not have ID, he/she must sign the lineup card or forfeit the game. All information must match the official League roster.
- C. After properly notifying the plate umpire, all protests (including player eligibility) must then be submitted in writing accompanied by a \$35.00 protest fee and received at the League mailbox within two business days following the protested game; otherwise, the game will stand as played. The information will be assessed and ruled on by the UIC and/or Board who will respond within 72 hours of receiving the protest. If the protest is upheld, the protest fee will be returned. If denied, the fee will revert to the League. All protests can only be submitted once. All decisions made by the UIC/Board are final.
- D. The UIC and the NCUA will review any rule protest. If upheld, the protest fee will be returned. If denied, the fee will revert to the League.

XXV. Member Conduct Complaints

- A. Members are expected to behave in a respectful manner toward the game, the umpire, the fans, their teammates, and their opponents. Complaints pertaining to violations of the Member Code of Conduct should be registered in writing to the Board within 48 hours of the action. Ejections are considered violations of the Member Code of Conduct and will be written up by the umpire.
- B. The UIC and/or Board will review the complaint within 72 hours of receipt and will decide whether disciplinary action is necessary. The Board can decide to suspend or expel a member, or a team based on the severity of the conduct.

XXVI. Appeals

- A. Teams and players may request exceptions to their divisional assignment described in Sections I and IV of this document for good cause by submitting a written appeal to the Board via email along with a \$35 fee.
- B. All appeals for WS Berth & EOS Tournament eligibility must be submitted by the last day of regular season play.
- C. All appeals will be heard by the Board either over the phone or in person. A representative from the appeal submitting party will have the opportunity to attend the appeal hearing and state their case. All appeals can only be submitted once. All decisions made by the Board are final.
- D. The Board shall have the authority to review and edit the rules contained herein.

XXVII. Health & Safety Guidelines

- A. Violation of any mandated SF Health & Safety Guidelines will result in suspension or expulsion from the league (see Health & Safety Guidelines Document).

XXVIII. ADA Players and Requests

- i. ADA requests must be made to the SFGSL Commissioner. Use the ADA request form provided on the SFGSL homepage.
- ii. A player with an approved ADA accommodation that requires a courtesy runner (CR) can use a CR each time they successfully reach first base or beyond.
- iii. There is no accommodation that allows for a CR to start behind home and run for the batter. The batter must successfully reach first base or beyond before a CR can be used.
- iv. A player with an approved ADA accommodation may elect to be a defensive player only. The player must be included on the lineup card occupying the last spot in the batting order. Their place in the batter order will be skipped over, and no out will be recorded.